PELPUP NEWS

WINTER EDITION 1974 Number 28

The
Pelpup Club

PELHAM PUPPETS
MARLBOROUGH
Wiltshire
Telephone - 442

December, 1974.

Dear Pelpups,

A Happy Christmas to you all, and to the overseas members—a Happy New Year. Peace and Friendship to all our members everywhere, not only now but when you are grown-up and helping to rule this uneasy world. Remember, we are all members, if not of this Club, of the order of human beings.

We are always hearing of politicians being called puppets of this or that organisation (it does annoy me!) why can't they become responsible puppeteers and learn to pull the right strings at the right time. Then they wouldn't get into all these muddles!

The cost of the magazine twice a year plus postage already comes to more than the subscription, leaving nothing for daily postage of letters, badge and labour involved, also cost of puppets for prizes, so I reluctantly announce the year's subscription to go to 25p (the first rise since February 1971). The overseas remains at $1 for convenience. I should repeat that we have discontinued the five year subscription. I know it is maddening for really dedicated members but if only you knew the bother I have with changes of address—particularly with five year members, you would sympathise. Also, of course, it is inflation which goes against it—who knows, a bottle of Coke could be £1 in five year's time at this rate!! Don't worry, I'm exaggerating!

Winners of the playwriting competition are Jo Hanton for "Peter and the Witch" and David Webb for "The Reluctant Broomstick".

Winners of the Photographic Competition are Uli Rennert-Schlemm, W. Germany, Mark Wehrle, U.S.A., Philip Holland, Lancs. Here are the results of the Personal Portrait:— Timothy Screech, Paul Brand, S. Africa, Susan Betts, Oliver Nagele, W. Germany.

The four entries for the Cartoon Competition are from Amanda Herschel-Shorland; Catherine Herschel-Shorland; Roy Fletcher and no name. (Please see you always write your name and address on the back of drawings, photos, plays or anything—if you want to win a prize).

That will be one puppet each for all the above winners. Would you please

write and tell me which puppet you would like. I am afraid that I have to exclude the vent puppets.

I shall cut back on prizes for the Photographic Competition in the next issue (say two prizes for photographs of puppets as normal) and concentrate on prizes for stamps again for the Priory Church. It was a great success, and they were very grateful, as you read in the last magazine, so could you get stamp collecting again. For the benefit of new members, let me explain—it is for used stamps but they must only be the large commemorative kind, i.e. not the normal every day ones, unless of course you come from far away and they are very pretty. This gives the overseas members great advantage, so I am keeping two prizes for home members (i.e. judging them separately). Please be sure to put your name and address in with the stamps and the total number collected.

There is a page on record ideas. I want to add to this that I have tried the whole series of Wally Whyton Hallmark Records, and find they offer great possibilities for puppet scenes. What I like about his records are the sound effects he brings in at appropriate moments. Here's another good one by the same make "Pop Party" SHM 766. There is a whole range of 7″ 45 r.p.m. extended play records by Mr. Pickwick. You need to look through the list and pick out the ones you think might suit the puppets you have got, then listen to them and work out what action you can put to them.

On the front cover you will see the new Vent Clown for 1975. It is the same price as the others and should retail at around £6.85. Please order through your local shop. If you have any trouble let me know, or visit Hamleys or Harrods when you next go to London—(sorry, members in Singapore, that was not meant for you!)

There are some details of Jan Bussell's forthcoming shows, and two symbolic puppets. Also he has kindly let me print an extract from his most recent book "The Pegasus Book of Puppets" (Dennis Dobson). I thoroughly recommend this book. In my opinion he writes more good sense about puppets than anyone I know. Another very good source of puppet knowledge is in A. R. Philpott's "Dictionary of Puppetry". (Macdonald).

Good luck,

Pelpop

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

PLEASE SEND MY NEXT MAGAZINE I ENCLOSE P.O. FOR

25p

for 1 year's subscription

Date .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

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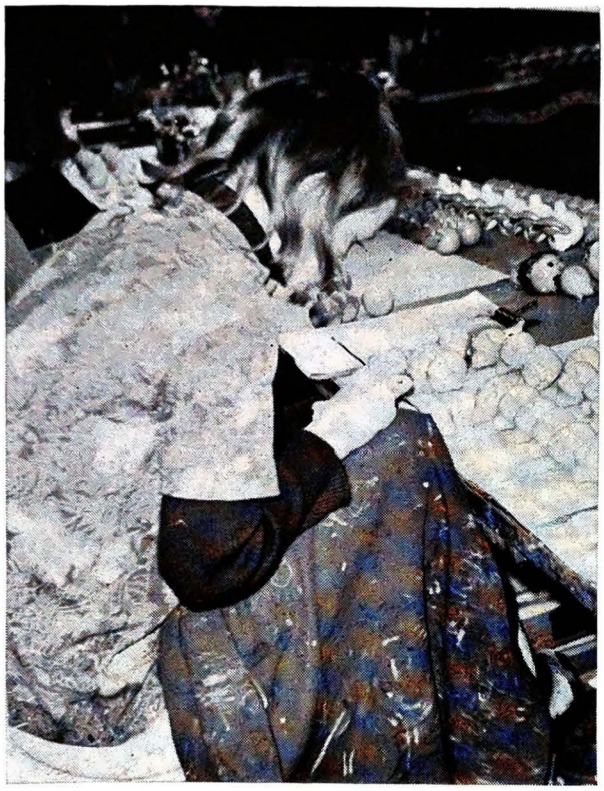
A walk around the factory

By FRANK LAWTON

In the last two magazines, we have been describing how we go about making the puppets which you buy in your local shop. In No. 26, we saw the Moulding and Machine Rooms, and the Assembly Room. No. 27 took us on to looking at the cleaning of the mouldings, the Dipping Room, Animal Assembly, and we saw how the clothes are cut out on Megan's machine.



Sewing and Dressing

After cutting, the pieces go to the sewing machines. There are nine machines, of which you can see three in the picture, and they are bigger and faster than the kind in general use in the home. The motors are running all the time, and the foot-pedal simply connects the running motor to the sewing part of the machine, just like the clutch on a car. The lady in the middle of the picture is Doris, who has been with us for many years.

Next, the sewn clothes are turned and pressed, and passed on to the Dressing Table. Here, the clothes, and the bodies from the Assembly Room come together, the dressing being completed by hand-sewing. In the foreground of the picture, you can see Betty finishing a Gypsy.

For the benefit of new members, the subscription of 25p entitles you to a badge and a year's subscription to the magazine—i.e., two magazines, one on joining, that is the current copy, and the next issue. They come out in Aug./Sept. and December. If you do not renew you are still a member but you will not receive a magazine.

If on receiving this magazine it is your second copy and you want to continue receiving magazines please renew your subscription on this form as soon as possible.

Subscription for U.S.A. and Canada: —

1 year $1

Please pay by International Money Order or Cash if more convenient.

Some of this work is done outside the factory, and may have to be stored in the "coffin" until it is needed. This is a very long, high cupboard with lots of wires stretched from back to front. The dressed bodies are hung on these wires, and in this way kept clean and creaseless until they go to the finishing table.

Headpainting

After leaving the Dipping Room, the next stop for heads is the Headpainting Room. "Headpainting" also means in many cases, bodies, arms and legs. We have at the moment 22 headpainters, 11 of whom work at home, having spent time at the factory, perhaps before getting married. Remembering that there are over 70 characters and that something like 10,000 puppets are produced weekly, you will see that headpainting must be done quickly and accurately.

In the picture, Valerie is painting in the white parts of the eyes of Fairy heads, and you can see some round wooden heads and Donald Ducks in the background.

Hair and Hats

Almost all of the 70 characters we make must have either a wig or hat or both. The Skeleton, of course, is the shining exception!

The most usual way of putting on a wig is to stick it on with glue, and you can see this happening in the picture. We use beads of bone glue mixed with water in a pot which is put in an electrically-heated water container.

The glue starts to harden as soon as it cools, so the job must be done quickly, and the hair pressed down onto the glued head before the glue gets cold. The great advantage of using this kind of quick-acting glue is that you do not have to sit holding the hair and head pressed together for ages while the glue sets.

We use a number of different materials for the wigs, including sheepskin, rug wool (as in the picture), nylon "hair", and even felt for Woodenheads.

Finishing

Between the Dressing and Hair and Hats Tables comes the Finishing Table (not illustrated).

This is where the body joins the head and the hands are attached. It is also the first moment at which the various parts which we have been following round the factory become actual recognisable characters.

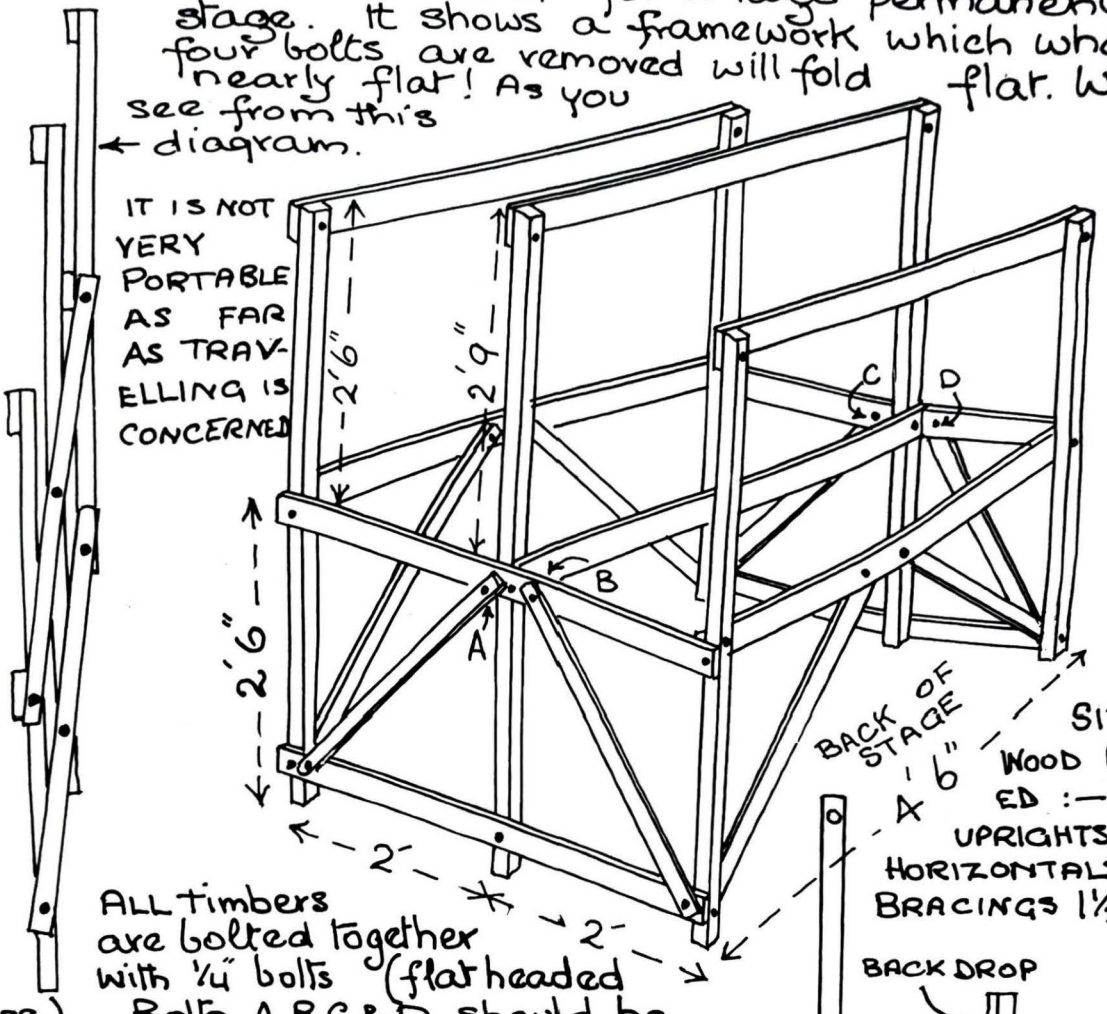
We have seen bodies and heads being made, heads dipped and painted, and clothes being cut out, machined and put onto the bodies. Now the puppet is being made ready for the last process, the one which makes it different, the stringing. This we will look at next time.

Owing to the high cost of postage I answer only letters that require an answer.

I do not acknowledge plays, photographs, requests for pen friends etc., etc.

A PROFESSIONAL STAGE

Here is a design for a large permanent stage. It shows a framework which when four bolts are removed will fold flat. Well nearly flat! As you see from this diagram.

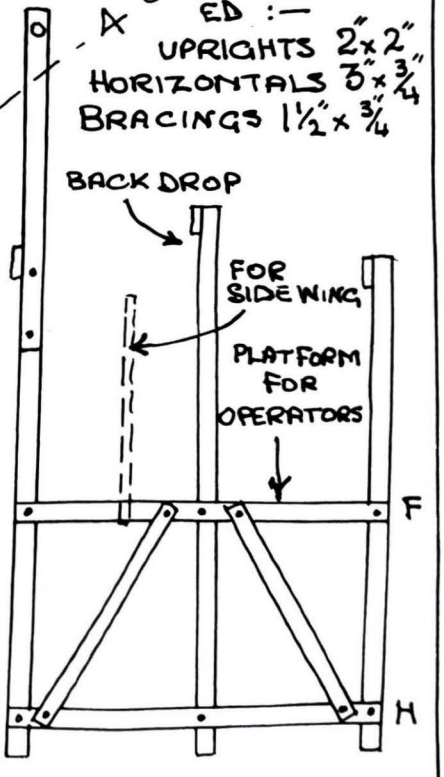


SIZE OF WOOD REQUIRED :—
UPRIGHTS 2" x 2"
HORIZONTALS 3" x ¾"
BRACINGS 1½" x ¾"

ALL timbers are bolted together with ¼" bolts (flat headed type). Bolts A, B, C & D should be done up with wingnuts, so they can be extracted when folding the stage. Wing nuts should face inwards.

Care must be taken in marking out the positions of the bolts so as to ensure EF & GH are parallel, or you will have trouble when folding.

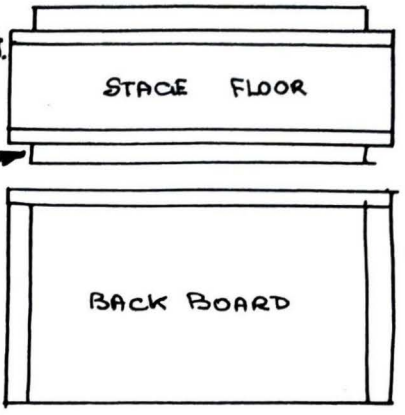
Add two side pieces to front of stage to support a curtain rail or rod from which a curtain may be hung to conceal operators stretching several feet out on either side & reaching to the ground with a square cut out for the stage opening. Fix support for sidewings.



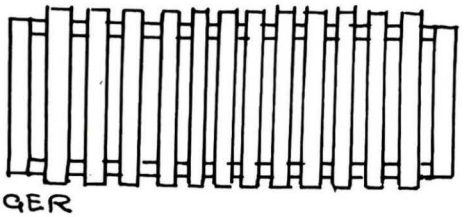
A piece of hardboard properly framed would do for the floor of the stage, but a piece of 5-ply or blockboard would be much stronger & more permanent.

If it's thick enough, it will not require framing. Just cut the four corners out so it drops in position.

I like felt on the stage floor, stretched out tightly & glued & tacked.

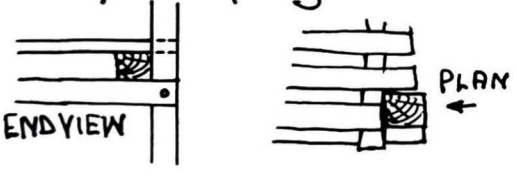


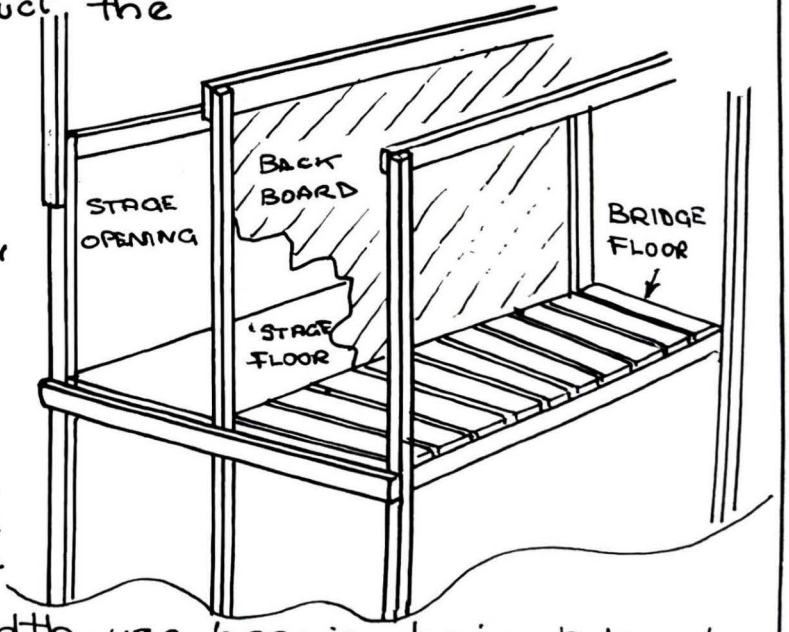
The back board can be thinner & framed. If you can get hold of a piece of insulating board you would find it makes a good back board, because it has a good surface on its own (it can be sprayed with an aerosol) & other scenes can be pinned very easily to it. Also you could have many boards, that you just slide in with different scenes on them.



A sheet of blockboard would do again for this, but I prefer a duckboard made from 2" x 1" slats nailed or screwed to two lengths of 2" x 2".

It is important to construct the platform so that it drops into position & it is locked there by the four uprights —





A box at each end acts as steps to mount the bridge.

Sizes mentioned are for an average sized stage. Should you be thinking of making one, say twice the width, use heavier horizontal members. Before folding, the stage floor, back board & bridge floor, must be removed. Check up periodically all nuts are tight.

JUGGLING

Pass two strings from the palm of the hand through a ball & attach to control.

YOU WANT A LARGE HOLE THRO' CENTRE

WHEN PUPPETS RIGHT HAND IS PULLED THE BALL RESTS ON RIGHT HAND ←

NOW FLICK THIS HAND & BALL WILL FLY UP IN THE AIR

PULL LEFT HAND STRING & BALL WILL FALL ON LEFT

Alternatively you can take one long string passing hand, through ball front of control, through it & down through ball again & through palm of other hand.

through back of one up to screweye in

NOSE ? FRONT OF CONTROL

HAND

FEET

HANDS

A WOODEN BALL IS BEST BECAUSE IT IS WEIGHTY.

TO WORK — PULL ONE STRING UP FOR BALL TO REST ON THAT HAND, GIVE IT A FLICK SO THAT BALL WILL RISE UP INTO THE AIR — PULL DOWN TO DRAW OTHER HAND UP TO CATCH IT.

Hand string must be long enough for ball to reach foot.

AFTER YOU HAVE MASTERED THIS MOVEMENT YOU CAN ADD A FOOT STRING IN THE SAME MANNER (ONLY ADD ANOTHER SCREWEYE FOR THIS STRING)

It is easy to carry out the same movement to throw the ball from one foot to the other, but the trouble starts when you try both sets of strings together — I will leave you to practise!

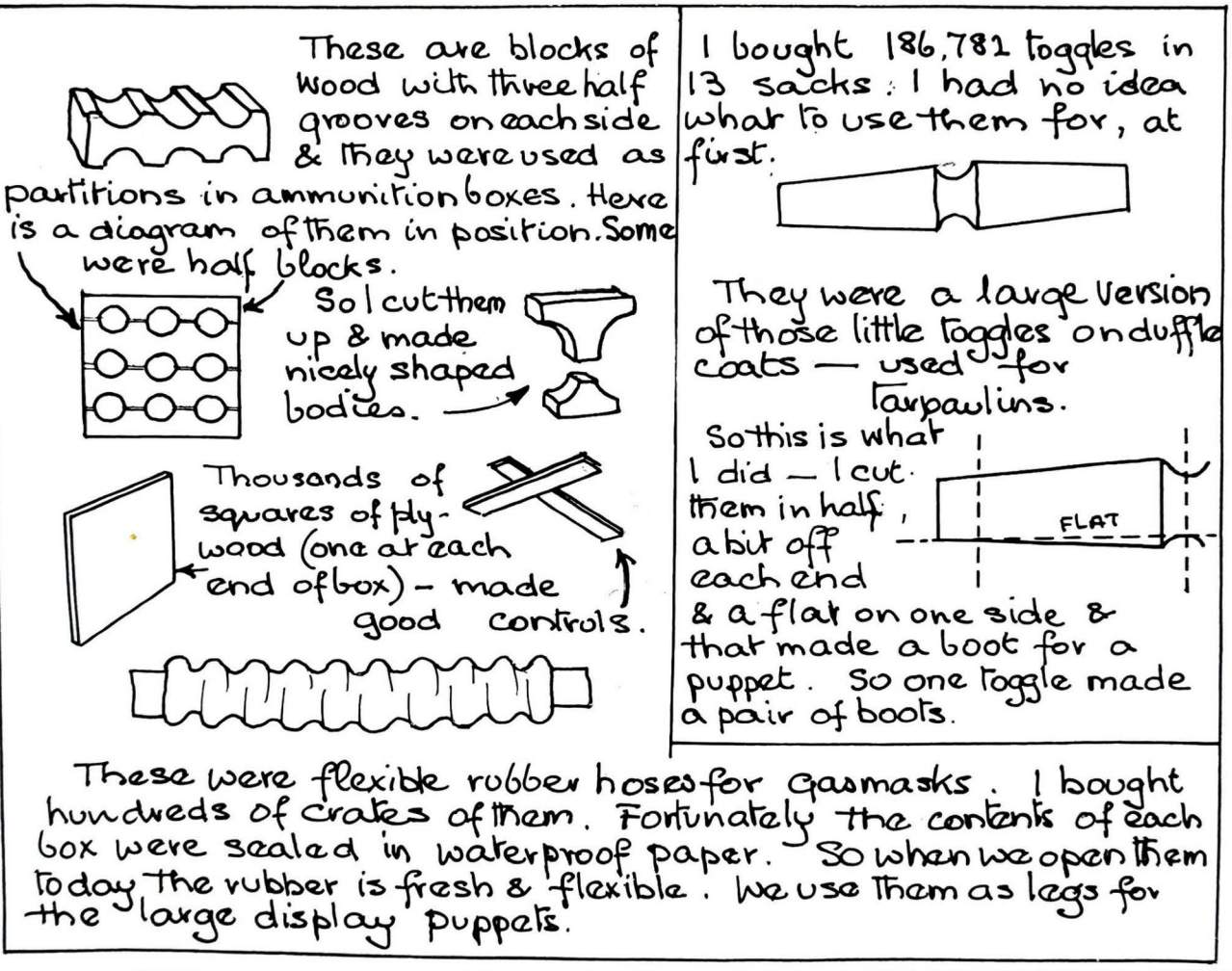
IF YOU HAVE TOO MANY STRINGS YOU WILL GET INTO AN AWFUL — "MUGGLE"

How it began

When I first started making puppets I used to look around for bits and pieces—door knobs, clothes pegs, loose banister rails, old woolly gloves, bits of carpets—nothing was safe! No wonder my poor father wished I would get back to architectural college and learn a useful profession!

I used to spend hours rummaging through Bert New's Scrapyard. Actually an improvising mind is a useful attribute for a puppeteer. That means looking around all the time for knick-knacks to use for puppet parts or props for your stage—for instance, that piece of Polystyrene packing that comes so often nowadays to protect delicate equipment, can be saved and will come in handy when constructing props for your stage, because it is so easy to cut and glue together (make sure you use the correct glue). Large screw bottle caps, large empty match boxes, large cylindrical boxes or smaller ones like baking powder and spices come in, all are useful for puppet parts.

One of the best sources for parts for my puppet making when I started in 1947 was a Government Surplus Depot in Bristol. They used to send me tenders for hundreds of this and that, such as ammunition partitions, pieces of plywood of a certain size, toggles, hand cleats, tank seats, head rests, tank exhaust covers, rubber respirator tubes and parachutes for dress material, cord for limbs. Illustrated below are some of the ones I used to best advantage.


These are blocks of wood with three half grooves on each side & they were used as partitions in ammunition boxes. Here is a diagram of them in position. Some were half blocks.
So I cut them up & made nicely shaped bodies.
Thousands of squares of plywood (one at each end of box) – made good controls.
I bought 186,781 toggles in 13 sacks. I had no idea what to use them for, at first.
They were a large version of those little toggles on duffle coats — used for tarpaulins.
So this is what I did — I cut them in half, a bit off each end & a flat on one side & that made a boot for a puppet. So one toggle made a pair of boots.
FLAT
These were flexible rubber hoses for gasmasks. I bought hundreds of crates of them. Fortunately the contents of each box were sealed in waterproof paper. So when we open them today the rubber is fresh & flexible. We use them as legs for the large display puppets.

I am sorry I had to return so many back numbers, but as you can imagine I was inundated with them owing to my request in the previous magazine.

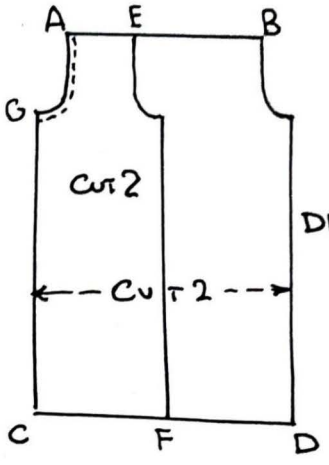
My search now goes back to Nos. 46–50 of the old hand-printed monthly magazines, 1954. The offer is the same, i.e., one puppet per magazine, but first please write and say if you have them. It will be a case of asking your Grandmother, I feel!

TO ACCOMPANY ROLF HARRIS' "JAKE THE PEG" RECORD.

A SMALL PAIR OF HORN-RIMMED SPECS. (OR CHEAP SUN GLASSES WITH DARK LENS REMOVED) WILL IMPROVE HIS CHARACTER.)

RECORD IDEAS

If you own a Vent boy you can very easily convert him into "Jake the Peg", by making this set of legs & changing them with those he already has. It is just a matter of untying the tape above the disc & tying on the new ones & this is how to make them.



If you already know how to make a pair of trousers, then it is easy for you to add an extra two half sections in the middle.

For the less acquainted these instructions will I hope be a help. I cannot provide full size patterns, so you must be guided by the dia. at top right & draw them out to size required. Each pattern is a rectangle with a notch cut out, as AG, off each top corner. (Dia.1)

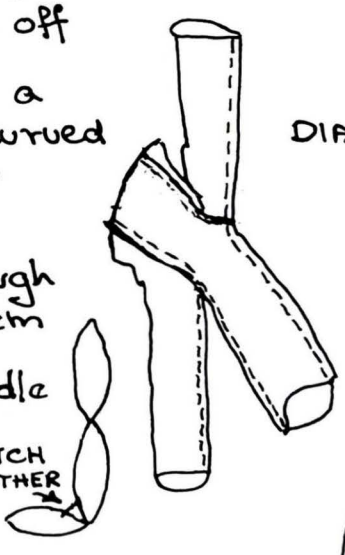
DIA. 2

Place a half size pattern AECF on a large one ABCD (Dia.1) & machine curved seam AG. Repeat this will other two patterns. Now join together all four patterns (DIA.2)

Now hem all bottoms of legs — though if you are clever it is better to hem them after the legs have been joined.

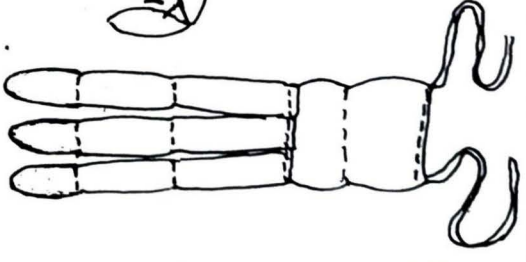
Then do all the leg seams. The middle leg has a seam on both sides.

Turn outside inwards & Press.



DIA. 3

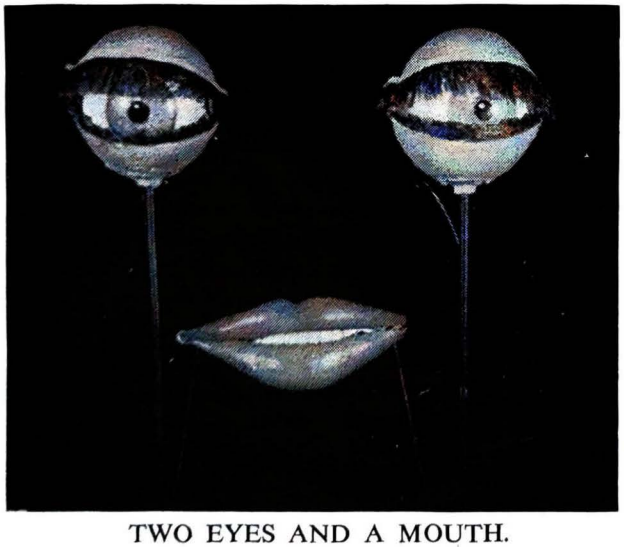
The body is two pieces about 8"x6" machined together like a pillow case. The legs are pieces about 15"x4½" machined up in long tubes. Body & legs are stuffed & machined across joints — ankle, knees, thighs & waist. A pair & a half of shoes would be nice.



The Hogarth Puppets

The Hogarth Puppets, directed by Jan Bussell and Ann Hogarth, have found a semi-permanent home for themselves at the Young Vic Theatre, near Waterloo Station. The Theatre has a large studio on the premises which has been put at the disposal of the puppets, and they have been performing there on and off twice daily since the beginning of October. These performances are mostly for schools in the London area, but anyone can go. They are one hour shows, and are designed for specific age groups, one week for the young ones and one week for the older ones. On December 23rd, 24th, 27th, 28th, 30th and 31st and January 3rd and 4th they will be giving family matinees at 2.30 each day, a Christmas programme running $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours for parents and children. The school shows (which are at 10.30 and 2 p.m.) start again on January 14th until February 25th on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and there will be family matinees every Saturday during this period.

They have decorated the studio walls with groups of puppets on exhibition, lit by spot lights, and it has the appearance of a magic grotto. The small children sit on the floor for the shows, and there are rostrums against the walls with seats for grown-ups.



TWO EYES AND A MOUTH.
A puppet (or is it three?) used in the Hogarth Puppet programmes for older children at the Young Vic.

Incidentally, the Hogarth Puppets will be mounting their exhibition of Puppets and Marionettes from many countries at the Livesey Museum in the Old Kent Road —not so far from the Young Vic—from January 8th to February 11th, and anyone interested in the foreign and historical aspect of puppetry will find it well worth a visit. There will also be a 'do it yourself' stand there where you can have a go at working a marionette.

'SUMMER'. A Hogarth Puppet from a ballet which they are presenting at the Young Vic.

CHAPTER TEN

PRODUCTION

by JAN BUSSELL

This is one of the shortest chapters in the book. But it is the most important. Yet strangely enough it will probably be the least read. I could write a whole book on puppet production, but few people would buy it, if indeed it ever found a publisher. For this reason I have scattered the whole text with hints on the subject—how to use the puppets when you have made them—and left myself only these last few pages in which to crystallize these ideas.

There are many people who make fine puppets and put on dreary shows. There are others who put on lively and amusing shows with poor puppets. Which would you rather see? Which is more important? What is it that makes the difference?

Production. Showmanship. The Art of Not Being Dreary with Puppets. With puppets especially; so many people are inclined to believe that the mere cleverness of manipulation is enough.

It is as if you were the first man to get up off all fours and walk on two legs. Well, of course, everyone would want to come and see the remarkable feat. For a few minutes. Then interest would begin to flag. To hold attention your walking would have to be put to some purpose. Can you reach the apple on the tree before your four-legged rival? Of course. It's a walkover. How dull. But no! Wait!

BUMP!

You have fallen over. You have learned your first lesson in production. The audience was losing interest in you, so you faked a fall, introduced suspense, a touch of drama, perhaps a laugh. They will stay with you longer now, begin to enjoy the experience. They are intrigued to know what will happen next . . .

And that is the whole secret of successful production. The audience must be continually intrigued.. The producer must put himself in the position of the worst type of spectator. He is feeling a bit jaded. He has paid for his seat. He doesn't really like puppets, anyway. He only came in thinking it was something else, or to please a friend.

This spectator must be wooed and won by every means possible. The theatre must be warm and cosy. His seat must be comfortable. He must be able to see without straining or stretching his neck. He must be able to hear easily every word that is said. He must not be kept waiting—especially not during scene changes once the show has started. Above all he must not be allowed to go to sleep. His interest must be constantly prodded and never allowed to wander.

A good producer is sensitive to all these dangers. During rehearsals he puts himself mentally in the place of this difficult customer and invents ways of forestalling all such disasters. He will move about the auditorium constantly interrupting the rehearsals during the early stages.

"Puppet A is hidden by Puppet B from this angle; keep him a little more to the centre. I can't hear what is being said over the music, keep the gram down a little. Mark the position. That shadow on the backcloth is very distracting, try moving the floodbox up stage; that's better. What is Puppet A doing now, bouncing and shaking? He's supposed to be standing quite still listening to B. When B turns to go *then* A follows him, and puts an arm on his shoulder and says 'Stop'—remember? Well, you must practice getting your hands in the right position without shaking him about. No, no, that's much too slow, A. B would have gone and the audience fallen asleep before A came out with 'Stop'. Try it again. Make it dramatic. That's better. Try it several times now, till you're sure of it. That's fine—that's really exciting." Now they both slowly turn to the centre and the Ghost appears. "I want to shorten the Ghost's dance. Yes, I know he's the best puppet we've got; yes, I know he dances beautifully. But once he's done his two different movements he's done them. The audience have seen it. The rest is all repeti-

tion, so start the music at that repeat phrase halfway in. And do remember the Ghost is supposed to be a *sad* Ghost. Put some character into it. And A and B, try and look really frightened. Feel frightened yoursleves. Good! Best yet! Right, scene change. Five seconds gone, 10 seconds, curtain up. Well—what's happened? No, Fred, you're supposed to do the left-hand wing. Ann does the backcloth. Well, you should have put it ready before we started. All right, we'll re-set the original scene and we'll try the change again. You'll lose the audience completely if you take as long as that, and it won't be until halfway through the next scene that they'll be really with you again. Ten seconds is the absolute maximum. With practice we can probably get it down to five. A gap with nothing to look at is even worse than a scene that is played too slowly. The scene change needs rehearsing more than the scene itself . . . "

And so on and so forth. Nearer the performance date there should be fewer and fewer things to put right, and the producer will let the show run through without a stop, making notes of any points he wishes to make and discuss afterwards. He must not act too much like a dictator. His decision is final, like that of an umpire, but it must be a fair decision always. He must always listen to the suggestions and ideas of the manipulators and encourage them in the early rehearsals to discuss problems with him. His job is to *help* them in their characterization of the parts and *help* them put their ideas across. Only he, out in the front, can judge how successful they are being. He must use great tact in order to encourage rather than discourage. He must win their trust and become a friend and adviser. It is no easy role.

But this really is only the last part of his job, the tidying up. Like an iceberg, the greater part of the work is unseen, and takes place long before the first rehearsal, when he is planning the show. Whether it is a play or a variety show, he must visualize the whole thing in detail, plan the entrances and exits and the practicalities, and the sort of scenery and lighting and music, and try to foresee all the snags. He must break the whole thing up in his mind into scenes and sequences which contrast with each other. He must not only be sure that each sequence has its rise and fall of interest, with its peak towards the end, but that they complement each other—a quiet scene after a boisterous one, a brighty lit one after a dark one.

Nothing must go on too long, not even tense excitement. He must plan to work on his audience with psychology, whetting their appetites but never giving them too much, thrilling them and then resting them, then thrilling them again. They must be given a chance to laugh after they have cried, and made to cry again after they have laughed, and even this in not too regular a sequence. Keep them guessing, alert. Make them work (without realizing it) and use their imaginations, and they'll always be grateful to you.

Above all, the producer must create in his imagination a kind of mood picture of the whole show—the overall impression it is going to make—his 'interpretation' of the script—his vision, his comment on humanity and the world. The puppet stage is his canvas, and he is the artist who is going to paint on it. No copying from photographs! This is creative work. It is someone's idea, conception, viewpoint. Most difficult of all, perhaps, he must carry this picture he has created of the finished show in his mind right through the rehearsal stage, and inspire his performers with the same vision, so that everyone knows what they are striving for.

That is more than half the battle, to know what you want and where you are going. So when you first get a play and decide to do it, or plan a variety programme, or even a single variety turn, think! Study! Visualize! Go over it and over it again in your mind, seeing it more clearly each time: make lists of the changing moods and tempos. Seek out all possible weaknesses. If a scene seems too long, cut it. If it has its peak at the beginning devise some piece of business or some effect that will revive interest again at the end; or rewrite it. Always try to suggest things to the audience, rather than giving them every laborious detail. This gets their imaginations going. Never repeat yourself or give them too much.

Only when you have a clear picture in your mind of the overall effect you want to achieve do you begin to work out the mechanics of entrances, exits, scene changes, etc. Only when these are planned do you start rehearsals. Only when the show is over do you know whether you were right or wrong, but by that time everyone has forgotten you and is busy praising or damning the puppeteers. Don't tell them—but they are your puppets.

PELPUPS WRITE

RICHARD TUKE.—I am writing to tell you about my puppet club. It is really super and I enjoy working with puppets more than anything else in the world. I call the club Leo Puppet Club. I have given my members each a folder with lots of equipment for doing shows and organising shows. All the money we get, we give to charity. Where I live there are a lot of Old People's Homes where we can do shows. So far we have raised about £25 with all the shows this year.

JULIE (of Totton, Southampton).—I am hoping to do a play on Christmas Day and I'm going to be busy rehearsing it. I have made a puppet of my own, a dragon; it is made out of an empty detergent bottle, three cups from egg boxes, wire, head piece of cardboard, legs wire or wood, etc., strings. I am also hoping to make a snake with French knitting and the ghost puppet in your *Pelpup News*.

CELIA MINTY.—This last year's play was about the adventures of an ice crystal. It was hard work but well worth it. As students our spare time is rather scarce but we spent the Christmas vacation (the show was in January) making the puppets. This had its funny side—my friend Linda made the Sun and the Moon at home and brought them back up to Edinburgh with her on the train. Her subject is Astrophysics, so imagine the reaction of fellow passengers when in an effort to get her packed lunch she removed from her bag a book on Astronomy and then the Sun and the Moon! Last year we put on a play about Nessie the Loch Ness Monster. She was brown with yellow spots and shaped like a real semi-aquatic prehistoric monster; she seemed so alive that one little boy thought she really was!

SEAN WILLIAMSON.—I think platform shoes make Pop Star puppets very real. I make mine out of clay and paint them with silver, then I add glitter. I am going to use a pair in my next show with Hansel wearing them.

RUTH POOLEY.—My father is a Vicar and recently my sister and I acted puppets to the words of my father's sermon. The collection that day was a lot more than usual. Since not all puppeteers are Vicar's children, I suggest that you go to the local Vicar. I'm sure he would co-operate in every way possible. I find egg cosies convenient for changing a puppet's identity by using them as hats. This is quick for use in the middle of a play. With more time at hand (and patience) egg cosies make good bloomers and shorts.

DONN EDWARDS, Orange Free State, S. Africa.—I have built myself a portable theatre at the cost of about Thirty Rands (I don't know how much it is in British money). I have also designed my own Ultimate Theatre. I write my own plays and have already produced three in the last twelve months, and am about to produce three more. Last month I saw a South African production "Aladdin and His Magic Lamp". There I met Dinah Newton, a leading theatre producer, and had a chat with her.

JOHN BARRETT.—Just before Christmas in 1968 I was looking round with my parents to decide what to have for Christmas. In a large toy shop I saw your Policeman and Cat, I took a liking to them and got them for Christmas. One of my friends had received Bengo, Baby Dragon and Giant for Christmas. So together with our puppets we started doing little plays. Unfortunately we never got round to giving a performance although we wrote several plays, among them "The Wicked Giant". This is our favourite play and I will send it to you with my next letter. Then we gradually lost interest until early 1971 when I became a Pelpup. This revived our interest and we started planning our first show. Unfortunately we never performed it due to not having a good stage. However, during this time I got one of your kits and made a Witch. Then interest tailed off a lot. Then another comeback; we met another friend with a Skeleton and a Poodle. The Poodle was in a terrible state and had to be completely restrung. Then interest lagged once more and I have not seen either of them since. However, on my birthday in May this year, a breakthrough—I received two puppets, a Frog (who is my favourite) and an SM. Girl. Then soon afterwards I bought myself Gepetto. My mother made a Father Christmas outfit from issue No. 22, which increased my scope to six puppets, seven characters available. This was a marked improvement on my previous three and interest flared again. Two new helpers, Steven Willis and James Weaver, help me now. I made a stage, Steven helped paint my one piece of scenery, Kitchen scene, and we were away. We now practice a lot and are thinking towards a show once again. I am going to contact my two former friends from

'68 and then we'll really get going. A few days ago I started making a combination of collapsible clown Issue No. 12 and clown with detachable head, Issue No. 13. When it is finished it will have all the normal puppet strings and so will be my most complicated puppet.

NENAGH WATSON.—My little sister and I appeared in the local press on Monday, 4th November. This is because on the Friday we did a puppet show to the "Over 50's Club" at Borth Place Community Centre. It was really great, we enjoyed ourselves, they enjoyed themselves and so did our puppets.

SEAN WILLIAMSON.—My puppet group has been running for two years under many different names. In the summer of 1972 I bought my first puppet and my friend and I soon became very interested in your puppets. By August we had three puppets, a horse, a girl and a boy, and our first group, consisting of two puppeteers and an electrician who with the help of his dad fixed up lighting on our first stage. In October of the same year we put on our first show at an Old People's Home for about 15 people. This went down very well and the Home thanked us very much. As we lived quite near each other, the two puppeteers, my friend and I, practised very often. By the time Christmas came we had five puppets, the two new ones being the Giant and the Poodle. At Christmas we put on three shows at Children's Homes, like Dr. Barnardo's. For the first one the group was still together, but after that the electrician left us and the group was down to two. At the second and third of these performances I worked alone as my friend was unable to attend them. So in our first six months we had gained a lot of knowledge of the puppets. During this first six months we had a small garden party, which was attended very well, and at this we put on a small show. We raised £2 for the National Children's Home. When we took the money to them they said we would be able to put on a show there. In 1973 we put on a show at Heyhouses School but that was all, but by now the group consisted of eighteen puppets and two dummies. 1974 has not brought us any shows yet, but we are preparing to have a few at Christmas. Now both puppeteers have a stage and lots of good furniture. We use things like Cindy beds and other doll's furniture that fits, we make chairs and tables ourselves out of balsa wood. Now in June 1974 our total of puppets stands at 22 and two vent puppets.

JENNIFER POWER.—We have done several plays using Pelham Puppets which we have collected over the years. At each performance we have had a collection and have collected about £1.50 to £2 for different charities. These include Dr. Barnardo's and Handicapped Children.

The following would like to contact Pelpups living in their area:

CATRIONA CAMERON, Shamrock Farm, Assington, Colchester, Essex.

SARAH SMEATH, 'Devoran', School Lane, Boxford, Nr. Newbury, Berks.

WILLIAM HOWE, 25 Gordon Road, Chelmsford, Essex.

TIMOTHY MURPHY, 52 Pentland Avenue, Shoeburyness, Essex, SS3 9ND.

MICHAEL O'DWYER, 67 Covington Way, Norbury, London, SW16.

SEAN WILLIAMSON, 34 Sandhurst Avenue, St. Annes-on-Sea, Lancs. Would also like a pen friend from any part of the world, aged 12-14 years. Hobbies: puppetry, music, swimming and acting.

EDWIN FARE, 354 W. Valley Stream Blvd., Valley Stream, NY. 11580, U.S.A. Would also like a pen friend, a boy from anywhere in the world speaking English, aged 11-13 years. Hobbies: puppetry, music, magic, woodwork and indoor plants.

The following is a List of Members who would like Pen Friends:

DEBBIE BLOOMFIELD, 1944 Sunset Lane, Cincinnati, Ohio 45238, U.S.A., a boy from any part of the world aged 14-15 years. Hobbies: music, swimming, boating and horses.

TINA COULTHURST, 150 Windermere Avenue, Nuneaton, Warks, a girl aged 12-14 years from Canada or Great Britain. Hobbies: swimming, music, singing, pets and drama.

JULIET EDWARDS, Mitford Lodge, Windsor Road, Saltburn-by-Sea, TS12 1BQ, an English-speaking girl aged 12-13 years from anywhere in the world except Great Britain. Hobbies: reading, pets, puppetry, stamp and post card collecting, writing and needlework.

HELEN GILES, 9 The Grove, Horsell, Woking, Surrey, a girl or boy aged 13-14 years. Hobbies: pop music, puppetry, drama, cooking, pottery, art and reading.

JANE HAYWARD, 17 St. Olaves Road, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, a girl aged 9-10 years from Spain, France, Holland or Switzerland. Hobbies: reading, stamp collecting, puppetry, animals, art and drama.

HEIDI ANN HENSCHEL, 504 W. Maple Avenue, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin 53916, U.S.A., a girl or boy aged 9-11 years. Hobbies: swimming, music and animals.

BARBARA JOHNSTONE, 60 Dunabban Road, Inverness, Scotland, a girl or boy aged 12-13 years from anywhere in the world except Great Britain. Hobbies: drawing, swimming, tennis, reading, puppetry and dancing.

KATHERINE MCADAM, 20 Willow Road, Warwick 6024, Perth, W. Australia, a girl or boy aged 14 years from America. Hobbies: reading, drama, puppetry, horse riding and the study of American Indians.

JUDITH MILLS, 85 William Street, Ystrad, Rhondda, Glamorgan, S. Wales, a boy or girl aged 10-12 years from anywhere in the world able to speak English. Hobbies: horse riding, magic, puppetry and and dancing.

HELEN RENTON, 16 Cross Lanes, Richmond, N. Yorkshire, a girl aged 10 from anywhere in Europe. Hobbies: puppetry, reading, drawing and horses.

CLARE SAUNDERS, 36 Whitstable Road, Canterbury, Kent, a girl or boy living in England aged 10-12 years. Hobbies: reading and puppetry.

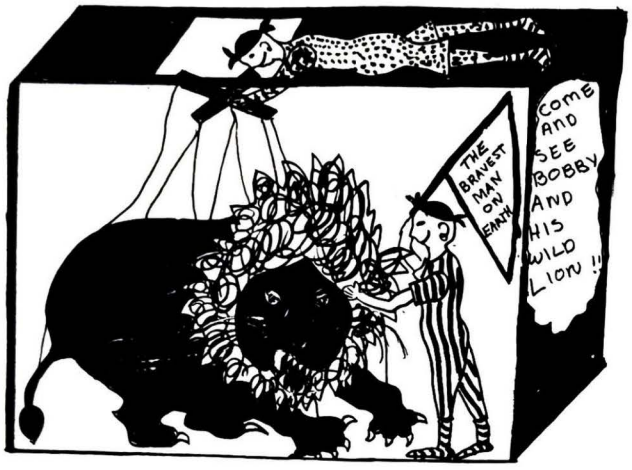
ADINA SMALLWOOD, 62 Blenheim Drive, Witney, Oxfordshire, an English speaking girl from any part of the world, aged 10-11 years. Hobbies: needlework, puppetry, writing and French National dolls.

ELAINE TAYLOR, 4 Addison Avenue, Southgate, London, N14, a girl from Canada or America aged 7-8 years. Hobbies: puppetry, reading, stamp collecting and ballroom dancing.

ANDREW GOULD, 12 Innage Lane, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, a boy from any part of the world except England. Hobbies: rock and stamp collecting, puppetry and acting.

ALEX W. TEMPLETON, 24 West Albert Road, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 1DL, a boy or girl aged 11-13 years from Canada, America or Mexico. Hobbies: birds, cycling, pop music and cars.

CARTOONS

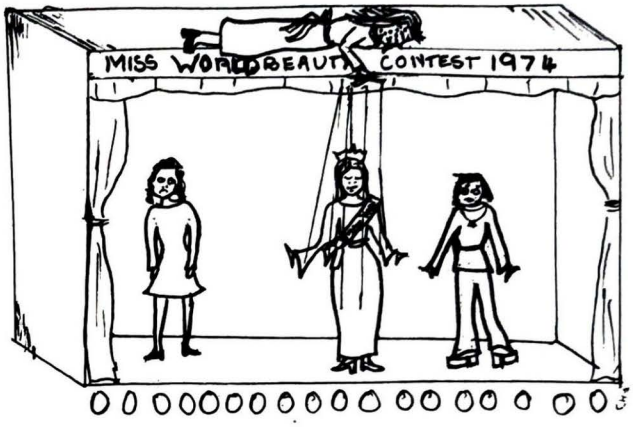


AMANDA HERSCHEL-SHORLAND

* * *

JOHN
DO YOU THINK YOU COULD SEE BOB PELHAM ABOUT GETTING ME A JOB AT PELHAM PUPPETS?
I'LL PULL A FEW STRINGS FOR YOU.
PELHAM PUPPETS
Roy Fletcher

ROY FLETCHER



CATHERINE HERSCHEL-SHORLAND

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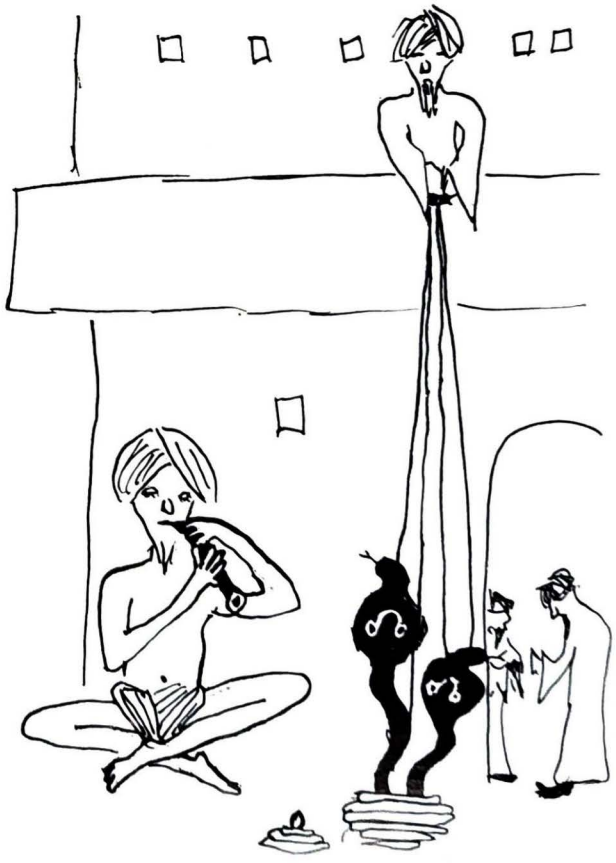

The Reluctant Broomstick

By David Webb.

(*Characters:* S.M. Witch, Skeleton, Wizard, Giant).

Act 1.

(*The scene opens in the middle of some woods at midnight. The Witch is sitting on her broomstick*).

Curtain up.

Witch: Abacabeezee, abacazoom, fly away, fly away, oh noble broom.
Broom: NO!
Witch: What do you mean, no?
Broom: I'm not going!
Witch: Why aren't you?
Broom: I'm on strike!
Witch: Why?
Broom: Too much work!
Witch: You silly lump of cedar! (*She bangs it on the ground*).
Broom: Ow! That hurt!
Witch: Good.
Broom: You old hag!
Witch: Why you . . . (*There is a cloud of smoke and the Skeleton appears*).
Broom: Trust 'im to come along.
Witch: Don't listen to that . . . stick! Anyway, you can help here.
Skeleton: What can I do?
Broom: Absolutely nothing.
Skeleton: If that was meant to be rude, I'll pretend I didn't hear it.
Broom: It was.
Skeleton: I will then.
Witch: Stop arguing, you two. Anyway, Skelebones, can you help me teach this broom a lesson? Come with me.

Curtain. End of Scene One.

Scene Two.

(*In a cave. The Witch and Skeleton enters L.*).

Curtain up.

Skeleton: There's two possibilities, the first is to burn it and the other is to exchange it for another one.
Witch: The first one has one advantage and two disadvantages. The advantage is that it would get rid of the broom.
Skeleton: And the disadvantages?
Witch: It is so full of magic, we would not know what might happen to it and us, and anyway, I would not know what kind to get after. I think we should take it to Merlin the Wizard, see what he says about it.
Skeleton: But Merlin lives right up in the Hills of Dread.
Witch: I know. We'd better set off right now.

Curtain.
End of Scene Two.

Scene Three.

(*In an old house. The Wizard is sitting by a fire. There is a large pot hanging over it*).
Witch (*enters L.*): Hello, Merlin. We've come to ask you about a little problem we've . . . or at least I've got.
Wizard: What's that?
Skeleton: Well, Witch's broom is reluctant to even moving . . .
Wizard: Oh dear.
Witch: . . . And we came to ask you for some advice.
Wizard: Well, my good friend Giant has a recipe for a cure of reluctancy, you see his club was reluctant for a spell. Giant accidentally put one on it, it recovered, but it was very angry about Giant's mistake, and it wouldn't work.
Witch: Well, where does this good friend live?
Wizard: Just over on the next hill.
Skeleton: How will we recognise his house?
Broom: I . . I . . h . . h . . hope . . y . . you . . d . . d . . don't!
Wizard: Shut up you! There is a large rock which you'll see . . . just say CLOSE and it will open, do the opposite when you come out. That is where he lives.
Witch: Thank you. We'll go now.
Wizard: Goodbye.
Witch: Bye.
Broom: Good riddance! (*Witch and Skeleton walk off*).

Curtain. End of Scene Three.

Scene Four.

(*In an underground cavern. Witch and Skeleton enter R.*)

Curtain up.

Witch: Oh Giant, where are you?
Giant (*offstage*): Who is this, who dares to enter my cavern?
Witch: Two very good friends of Merlin.
Giant (*entering L.*): A friend of Merlin is a friend of mine.
Skeleton: That's good to hear.
Giant: Well then, what do you want me for?
Witch: We hear you have a cure for reluctant objects.
Giant: I've got the recipe for it.
Skeleton: That's really what we want.
Giant: I'll go and get it for you then. (*He goes off L.*).
Witch: Giant's being quite helpful, isn't he?
Skeleton: Very helpful indeed.
Broom: Not really.
Witch: He is, and you know he is. (*Giant enters L. He is carrying a piece of paper*).
Giant (*He gives Witch the paper*): Here you are.
Witch: Thank you. Goodbye.
Giant: Goodbye. (*Witch & Skeleton off R.*).

Curtain. End of Scene Four.

Scene Five.

(*Back at the Witch's cave Witch and Skeleton enter L.*).

Curtain up.

Witch: Well, now we've got the recipe, we can get the ingredients.
Broom: Sounds as if they're baking a cake!
Witch: Shut up. Right, Skelebones, read out the ingredients.
Broom: Still sounds as if they're baking a cake.
Skeleton: Shut up, for the fiftieth time. Right, first ingredient is a human eyeball.
Witch: That's easy enough, I've got plenty of those.
Skeleton: The second and last ingredient is a stick off a Ghoulie tree.
Witch: That's alright. I've got a Ghoulie tree in my garden.

Curtain.

CURTAIN UP.

(*There is now a cauldron in the cave*).

SKELETON: Now for the moment of truth. Dip the Broom in.

(*Witch dips it in and takes it out again*).

BROOM: I don't know what it's done to me; but I feel so happy. I'll never complain again!

SKELETON: That's my job done then.

WITCH: Thank you so much. I'd never have done this without you. Goodbye.

BROOM: Goodbye Skele. (*There is a cloud of smoke and Skeleton disappears*).

WITCH: Abacabeezee, abacazoom, fly away fly away, oh noble Broom. (*The Witch flies away on the Broom*).

CURTAIN. THE END.

Peter and the Witch

By JO HANTON.

Cast: MARIANA, a witch; GEORGE, a baby dragon; PETER, a boy; DAISY, a horse; CAROLINE, a cow; BORIS, a black cat.

Props: 1 cardboard-box table, 1 cardboard-box chair, 1 broomstick in the corner, 1 book of spells, 1 mirror on wall (wing), 1 plate, 1 glass, 1 magazine. Painted on backdrop: A cauldron, a fireplace, bottles on shelves.

Scene 1: The Witch's Cave. 2: A Forest Clearing. 3: The Witch's Cave. 4: Outside the Witch's Cave (Acts I and II).

SCENE 1. THE WITCH'S CAVE.

Mariana has just woken and is calling George, who is asleep in a corner. Boris is asleep in front of the fireplace.

MARIANA: George, for goodness sake wake up! There is wood to fetch, and water to carry; the fire to light and my breakfast to cook! Are you going to sleep all day?

GEORGE: Oh! Oh! Is it time to get up already? I'm sure I've only just gone to sleep. It took me such a long time to catch those bats for you last night.

MARIANA: You've been sleeping long enough and I'm hungry! There are no toads left in the larder and Boris hasn't caught any mice! Get up, you lazy dragon, and light the fire. Then take the basket to collect the toads, and a bag for some acorns—I want to make an acorn pie again today, I do enjoy them. And don't forget the firewood, you'd better get that first of all, Hurry up!

BORIS: Miaow! Hurry up, dragon, I'm cold!

George goes off stage.

End of Scene.

SCENE 2. A FOREST CLEARING.

(One wing is a tall oak tree)

Peter, Daisy and Caroline are sitting down in front of a bush. George is out of sight behind the bush.

PETER (*standing up*): Come on Daisy, we've had a rest, we'd better tie up these branches. Where's the rope, Caroline?

CAROLINE (*standing up*): Mooooooooo! Here, Peter, on my hat where it won't get lost. Get up, Daisy, and help me. Why are you lying there making that funny noise?

DAISY (*standing up*): *I'm* not making a funny noise! Perhaps Peter's got hiccups!

PETER: I've not got hiccups! Hush, what was that? It sounds like someone crying!

(*Loud sobs come from behind bush*).

DAISY: What is it? Have a look, Peter; there's something behind that bush!

(*Peter leans over bush. George emerges, crying, from behind bush*).

CAROLINE (*turning to run*): What is it? Quickly, Daisy, run! It might eat us!

PETER: Don't be silly, Caroline! It's only a baby dragon and he does sound unhappy. Hello, dragon, what's the matter? Are you lost or something? Who are you?

GEORGE (*still sobbing*): I'm George, and I'm not lost. (*sob*) I'm a prisoner (*sob*) and Mariana the witch, who stole me from my mother and father (*sob*) makes me do her work and won't let me go home. I wish I could run away.

PETER: Then why don't you? You could hide in bushes and ditches if you can't run very fast. Can't you fly?

GEORGE: No, my wings are under a magic spell, they won't move! Not until a leaf from the oak tree falls on them, and it's Spring now—I'll have to wait until Autumn! I can't reach the lowest branches to knock one off!

DAISY: You poor thing! I can't reach them, either. But if Caroline would let me put my front hooves on her back, I might be able to. Caroline is my friend the cow, this is Peter and I'm Daisy.

CAROLINE: No-one is putting their feet on my back until they've washed them! And then they must take off their shoes! I scrubbed my back last night and it took a long time—my back is a long way away from my feet, and my brush isn't much good now, I do like eating the bristles!

PETER: Don't be silly, Caroline, Daisy polished her hooves last night, too!

(*Daisy puts her front hooves on Caroline's back, but can't quite reach the branches*).

DAISY: I can nearly reach, Peter, but not quite: if you sit on my back before I climb up, *you* might be able to reach a leaf.

(*Puts her feet back on the ground*).

CAROLINE: Oh, no! Not *two* of you! If my poor back doesn't break I shall get rheumatism, and lumbago and slipped discs and my tail will drop off!

PETER: Oh, Caroline! Don't fuss! That's a jolly good idea, Daisy, we'll try again.

(*Peter jumps on to Daisy's back and Daisy puts her front hooves on Caroline's back again*).

CAROLINE: O-o-o-oh! My poor, aching back! I'm sure it's crumbling away! . . .

(*Peter reaches a leaf and Daisy puts her feet back on the ground. Peter jumps down*).

PETER: Here we are, George! Turn around: There! How do your wings feel now?

(*George flaps his wings*).

GEORGE: Oh, Peter, they move! Thank you, thank you so much! When the pins and needles stop I'm sure I shall be able to fly again!

PETER: I *am* glad, George. Now you can fly away from Mariana!

GEORGE (*glumly*): Oh! Yes. Mariana. I was so happy, I nearly forgot about Mariana. She's sure

to come after me. She'll see me in her Magic Mirror, jump on her broomstick and come and catch me, she can fly so much faster than I can! Then she'll tie my tail in a knot, and that hurts!

DAISY: Yes, Peter, she's got a Magic Mirror, and a broomstick—it's a Flybynight, Mark II—one of the latest models, and it can go very fast; a toad escaped from her cave last week, and I heard him telling a butterfly about it!

PETER: Oh! We'll have to think of something else, then, won't we? Don't worry, George! Have something to eat whilst I think: there are some sandwiches left, and there's some water in the bottle for you to drink. Then we'll all come back with you to Mariana's cave, and see what we can do!

End of Scene.

SCENE 3. THE WITCH'S CAVE.

Boris is sitting in front of the fire. Mariana has just finished her dinner and is asleep with her head resting on her arms, sitting at the table. An empty plate, a glass and a magazine are pushed to one side. She wakes up, yawns and stretches her arms.

MARIANA: George! George! Where are you! Sprouting Spiderlegs!—look at the time! He should have collected the ivy-leaves by now—where can he be? Show me, Mirror!

(*She walks to mirror and peers into it*).

Ah! There he is, Boris, coming along the path with three strangers! So he's found some friends, has he! And wasted time chattering, indeed! They don't look a very clever lot, but you never know. I'll leave the spell-book handy, and put a potion in the cauldron, just in case!

BORIS: Miaow! I've had no dinner—why can't I have a miaouse?

MARIANA: Don't be greedy! Open the door!

(*Boris walks off-stage and comes back with Peter, Daisy, Caroline and George*).

MARIANA: Where have you been, you wicked dragon! Where are my ivy-leaves? Who are your friends? Bring them closer so I can see them!

PETER (*slight cough*): I am Peter, I live in a cottage on the mountain, and this is Daisy, my horse, and Caroline the cow.

MARIANA: And what are you doing here? I might want to EAT you!

PETER: Oh! Please don't! We were walking home when we met George, and started to talk. He told us that you used to ride horses when you were young, but that now you ride a broomstick instead.

MARIANA: Hee! Hee! Hee! That's right, young man! Broomsticks are quicker and go much faster than silly horses, and they don't get bad-tempered and throw me off! But I can still ride a horse when I want to! Your silly horse doesn't look as if it could carry even a little gnome on its back!

PETER: Oh!—I'm sure she could! I'll bet that you couldn't ride her, though. I'll bet you couldn't ride Daisy to the top of the mountain and back!

MARIANA: Oho! And what will you bet?

PETER: I'll bet you Caroline and Daisy against that funny old mirror on the wall and George the Dragon!

MARIANA: Right, young man! We shall see! Let's go outside and we'll see what your Daisy can do!

(*Peter, Daisy and George go outside—Caroline stays by the door*).

MARIANA (*to Boris*): Quickly, Boris, dip your tail in the cauldron and paint my shoes with the potion—then they'll stick to the sides of the horse!

(*Boris does so*).

BORIS: Miaow! Now my tail is sticking to the floor!

(*Mariana and Boris go outside, Caroline comes back in and looks in corner*).

CAROLINE: I wonder if she'll miss it? It is a lovely one—I'm sure it tastes absolutely delicious!

End of Scene.

SCENE 4. ACT 1. OUTSIDE THE WITCH'S CAVE.
(*All cast except Caroline*).

MARIANA: Come here, Horse! Let me climb on your back!

GEORGE: I'll help you, tread on my shoulder.

DAISY: Ugh! Fancy taking a witch for a ride! She is bony!

PETER (*bends to whisper loudly in Daisy's ear*): Careful now, Daisy, and go as fast as you can!

BORIS (*stands up to whisper loudly to Mariana*): Hold tight, Mariana!—that potion's not a very good one, my tail's not sticky any more!

MARIANA: Come on then, old dopey! see if you can get to the mountain-top without tripping!

(*Mariana and Daisy ride off*).

End of Act 1.

ACT 2.

(*Peter stands at one side of stage. Mariana and Daisy enter at other side, sideways*).

MARIANA: Right! Steady, Horse! Turn—that's it! Now let's see you gallop, if you can!

DAISY: N-e-i-g-h!

(*Mariana and Daisy gallop across the stage, Peter gives a short, sharp whistle, Daisy STOPS! Mariana flies off, over Daisy, and lands in the bush, head first. Only her feet show*).

(*Enter George, Boris and Caroline, who is chewing the remains of the witch's broom. Daisy shakes her head*).

PETER: Daisy! You were marvellous! There, George! You're free! Caroline has brought the Magic Mirror from the cave, now *we'll* look after it!

GEORGE: Oh! Thank you! Thank you! Now I can go home!

DAISY: Thank goodness that's over! What a nasty old thing! Perhaps she'll fly away on her broomstick and never come back!

CAROLINE: OOOOoooooh! I have got stomach-ache! She won't be able to fly away on her broomstick, I've just eaten it! It was the tastiest broomstick I've eaten for a long time!

PETER: You greedy creature! You deserve to have stomach-ache! Come along, George, come home with us and stay for a little while until you've had a rest.

BORIS: Miaow! Please can I come too? I'm not really wicked, I hated living with Mariana. I would like to live with you!

PETER: Of course you can! We would love to have you, wouldn't we, Daisy, wouldn't we, Caroline?

DAISY & CAROLINE: As long as he's good!

(*They walk off the stage, laughing and singing*).

(*Mariana wriggles out of bush, shaking her fist after them*).

MARIANA: You nasty, ungrateful dragon! and you nosy interfering boy!—you've cheated me! I can't stay here now! I must see if my sister will have me, and she lives a long way away. And because of that beastly, greedy cow I shall have to walk!

THE END.

Photographic Competition

ULI RENNERT-SCHLEMM

MARK WEHRLE

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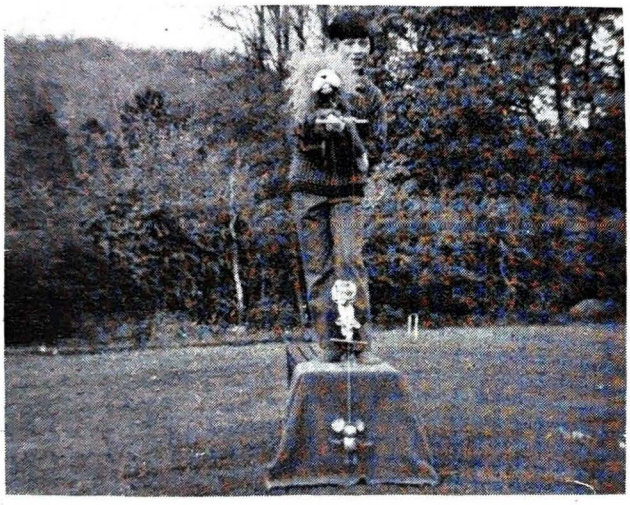
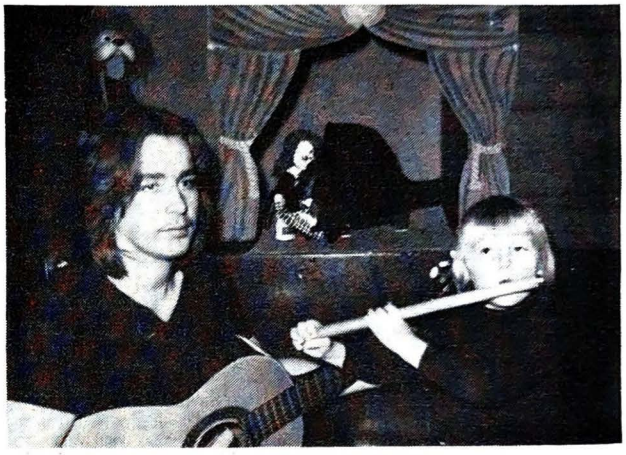
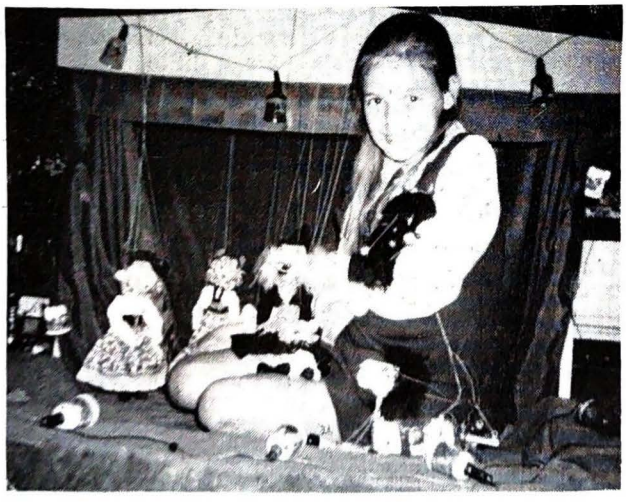
Personal Portrait



TIMOTHY SCREECH



OLIVER NAGELE



SUSAN BETTS

PAUL BRAND

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